

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

COME-00 AF-08 DHA-02 /095 W

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R 181700Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4358

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GY, US

SUBJECT: REPORT TO GUYANESE PUBLIC ON WILLS' WASHINGTON TRIP

REF: GEORGETOWN 0553 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. IN PRESS CONFERENCE FONMIN WILLS REPORTED ON HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON, SIGNALING NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH US. TALKS WERE DESCRIBED AS MOSTLY OF POLITICAL NATURE, AIMED AT FENCE-MENDING, BUT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAD ALSO BEEN DISCUSSED. HE REPORTEDLY PROTESTED ATTITUDE OF US PRESS TOWARD GUYANA AND "CRUDITY" OF SOME OFFICIAL STATEMENTS LAST YEAR. SECRETARY VANCE HAD ACCEPTED THAT GUYANA WAS NON-ALIGNED AND WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY COUNTRY TO SET UP MILITARY BASES ON ITS TERRITORY. ESSENTIALLY WILLS WAS SIGNALING TO GUYANESE PUBLIC THAT GOG POLICY IS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE

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US BUT THAT IT WOULD MAINTAIN ITS DIGNITY WHILE DOING SO, I.E., THAT WILLS HAD NOT GONE TO WASHINGTON AS A MENDICANT. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN WILLS HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 17 TO REPORT ON HIS TRIP TO WASHINGTON. LOCAL JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, PLUS A VISITING REUTERS CORRES-

PONDENT, ATTENDED THE SESSION. THE GUYANA CHRONICLE MARCH 18 CARRIED FRONT-PAGE FEATURE ARTICLE BY MOHAMED HAMALUDIN (WHO FREQUENTLY ACTS AS A CHANNEL FOR CONVEYING GOG ATTITUDES) ON WILLS' INTERVIEW AND TRIP TO WASHINGTON. THE ARTICLE, WITH A BANNER HEADLINE "BETTER GUYANA-US RELATIONS LIKELY" HAD AS ITS OBVIOUS PURPOSE TO SIGNAL AN UPTURN IN US-GUYANA RELATIONS, WHILE COMBATING THE IMPRESSION THAT WILLS HAD GONE TO WASHINGTON AS A MENDICANT.

2. THE LEAD WAS "RELATIONS BETWEEN GUYANA AND THE US WERE EXPECTED TO IMPROVE FOLLOWING THE VISIT LAST WEEK OF FOREIGN AND JUSTICE MINISTER FRED WILLS TO WASHINGTON." WILLS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HIS MAIN OBJECTIVE HAD BEEN TO PROMOTE THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THAT, VIEWED FROM THAT STANDPOINT, THE TRIP WAS A SUCCESS. THE OFFICIALS WITH WHOM WILLS AND HIS TEAM HAD MET IN WASHINGTON WERE LISTED AND THE WRITER GAVE A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF CURRENT SITUATION, MENTIONING THAT "SHARP EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO CAPITALS" HAD OCCURRED LAST YEAR FOLLOWING THE CUBANA AIRLINER SABOTAGE. THE MINISTER HAD STRONGLY PROTESTED THE ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN PRESS TOWARD GUYANA AND THE "CRUDITY" OF THE LANGUAGE IN SOME OFFICIAL STATEMENTS WHICH WERE CONSIDERED AN INSULT TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GUYANA. WILLS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE WAS TOLD THAT THE US CHARGE HAD BEEN SENT BACK TO GUYANA BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AS A SIGNAL THAT IT WANTED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH GUYANA. US OFFICIALS HAD AGREED WITH WILLS THAT ALTHOUGH THE SYSTEMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE US AND GUYANA DIFFERED, "WE CAN LIVE ONE WITH THE OTHER THROUGH RESPECT FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE, AND THROUGH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMITY OF NATIONS."

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, WILLS POINTED OUT THAT HIS TALKS IN THE US WERE MOSTLY OF A POLITICAL NATURE RATHER THAN ECONOMIC, AND WERE "AIMED AT BRIDGE-BUILDING AND FENCE-MENDING." THE DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, HE EXPLAINED, CENTERED ON THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH ECONOMIC COOPERATION COULD TAKE PLACE. WILLS HAD ASKED FOR THE CONDITIONS BUT WAS REPORTEDLY TOLD THAT THE US WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN THE PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION. QUERIED AS TO WHETHER THE GOG WOULD FORWARD PROJECTS TO WASHINGTON, WILLS WAS QUOTED: "ONE CANNOT ANTICIPATE THE EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY."

4. WILLS ALSO SAID HIS TALKS COVERED SOUTHERN AFRICA AND HUMAN RIGHTS AND THAT HE HAD EXPLAINED GUYANA'S "DEEP STRONG POLICY" ON APARTHEID AND ITS "IMPECCABLE RECORD" ON HUMAN RIGHTS. HE REPORTEDLY SOUGHT TO "DRIVE HOME"

THE POINT THAT GUYANA IS NON-ALIGNED AND WAS TOLD BY SECRETARY VANCE THAT THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION ACCEPTED THAT GUYANA WAS NON-ALIGNED AND WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY COUNTRY TO SET UP MILITARY BASES ON ITS TERRITORY. THEY HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO "CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE" AND THE OBJECTIVE NOW WOULD BE TO "MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THE DIALOGUE."

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5. THE SECRETARY REPORTEDLY TOLD WILLS THAT THE AMBASSADORIAL SCREENING COMMITTEE WOULD MEET MARCH 19 TO CONSIDER CANDIDATES FOR AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS FOR VARIOUS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING GUYANA.

6. COMMENT: WILLS' INTERVIEW APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FIGURATIVELY A TIGHT-ROPE WALKING EXERCISE. WHILE CONVEYING THE IDEA THAT THE GOG WAS SEEKING IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE US INCLUDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, HE STRESSED THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF HIS MEETINGS TO DE-EMPHASIZE THEIR AID-SEEKING NATURE. FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN INSISTING THAT HE BE TOUGH OVER THE ALLEGED "INSULTS" OF LAST YEAR, HE INDICATED THAT HE HAD PROTESTED THE ATTITUDE OF THE US PRESS AND THE "CRUDITY"

OF SOME STATEMENTS LAST YEAR. HE APPARENTLY WANTED TO
UNDERCUT RIDICULE THAT THE GOG WAS "COW-TOWING" TO THE USG.
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HIS STATEMENTS MADE CLEAR THAT THE USG AS WELL AS THE
GOG WAS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS. THIS LAST
POINT IS IMPORTANT TO WILLS AND OTHER GOG OFFICIALS WHO
SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS, INASMUCH AS EVIDENCE THAT THE US IS
NOT TURNING A DEAF EAR TO THEM STRENGTHENS THEIR HAND.
AND, INEVITABLY, GUYANA'S NON-ALIGNED ORIENTATION AND
SOUTHERN AFRICAN COMMITMENT WERE REEMPHASIZED. NO
MENTION OF THE AID MANPOWER TRAINING LOAN WAS MADE.
MENTION OF IT WAS PROBABLY DEFERRED IN ORDER TO RETAIN
THE PRIMARY PUBLIC FOCUS ON THE POLITICAL RATHER THAN
ECONOMIC MATTERS, AND IT MAY BE ANNOUNCED LATER AS EVIDENCE
OF AN IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP. END COMMENT.
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